

[11 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Minister of State for Law, Justice & Company Affairs alongwith Shri Ramesh Chennithala, M.P. has inspected the site on 26th and 27th March, 2000. The Committee has made detailed observations and suggested action on removal of unauthorised constructions & dumped garbages from Pamba, preparation of long term detailed master plan of the entire complex, action plan for pollution control of Pamba river, etc. The State Government has been requested on 8.6.2000 to initiate action on the above recommendations and formulate a proposal accordingly for fresh consideration of the Ministry. In view of this the already submitted proposal for balance area has been closed.

The State Government has not put forward any proposal pursuant to Ministry's request of 8.6.2000 for fresh consideration.

Polythene Menace

2188. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over five lakh cows die every year in the country on account of swallowing polythene bags;

(b) whether milk from animals/cattle who fall sick on account of consumption of polythene, has affected the health of large number of people; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to save the cattle and people from polythene menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests is not aware of any systematic survey done on the death of cows in the country due to swallowing of polythene bags and the effect of consumption of polythene bags on the quality of milk produced by them.

(c) Municipal bodies and non-governmental organisations have taken steps to provide shelters for stray cows. The Ministry of Environment and Forests have notified the recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 to check littering to plastic bags

and to encourage their recycling. The rules prohibit use of polythene bags made of recycled plastics for storing, carrying or packaging of ready-to-eat foodstuffs. Minimum thickness of virgin or recycled polythene bags has been specified as 20 microns. These rules also provide that the manufacture of plastics shall be undertaken as per the guidelines prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

Japanese investment in forest projects

2189. SHRI D. P. YADAV: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Japan is going to invest in new forest projects in India;
- (b) whether this investment is being made for Aravali forests, Rajasthan Forest Development and for other projects; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Aravali Forest Project, Rajasthan has been posed to Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) through the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance for Consideration for funding. The cost of the project is Rs. 555.75 crores, covering an area of about 1,45,000 hectares over a period of eight years. This project has been appraised by JBIC in 1998-99. Decision for funding the project has not been taken by them. No other forestry project has been formally posed to JBIC for funding.

Agricultural forests

† 2190. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that 69 percent of total forest in the country comprise agriculture forests;
- (b) if so, what is their position in forest policy of the country;

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.